

Understanding the Mass

First Reading

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

*Today our topic is the **First Reading**.*

The **First Reading** normally comes from the Old Testament, which is the part of the Bible that was written before Jesus was born. There are 46 books in the Old Testament, which tells the history of the people of Israel and of God's preparation for the coming of Jesus. In a very real way, the Old Testament speaks of God's love for us throughout history.



The Old Testament begins with the Book of Genesis, which starts with God creating the world. It ends with the Book of Malachi, who was one of the prophets of the Jewish people.

Each week at Sunday Mass, we hear a different part of the Old Testament in the First Reading - except during the season of Easter, when the First Reading comes from the Acts of the Apostles.

The First Reading is often connected to the Gospel Reading, either thematically (having the same topic) or showing how the Old Testament anticipates the coming of Jesus and His Church.

At the end of the First Reading, the reader or lector says: "The Word of the Lord".

These words act as a reminder to all of us that even though humans like us wrote the Bible, it was inspired by God, and is His Word to all of us.

As a congregation, we respond: "Thanks be to God". In this moment, we are thanking God for giving His Word to us - both in the Bible, and in the ultimate Word, which is Jesus.

How many books are in the Old Testament? _____

What is the first book of the Old Testament? _____

What is the last book of the Old Testament? _____